Tea, Music, and Dissonance: Life with Ludwig van Beethoven

by Jonathan Olvera

"In the quiet hum of the evening, where music and thought weave together like threads of a forgotten tapestry, I find my purpose not in the applause of the world, but in the delicate silence between each note, each breath, where the true symphony of life begins."

The morning always began the same way—filled with the comforting aroma of freshly brewed coffee and the steady hiss of a steaming kettle. It was a simple rhythm, one that filled the space with warmth and promise. The house, still a little unfamiliar to those who had recently moved in, seemed to echo with the potential of what was to come. The residents of this place had only just settled in, but their names already whispered through the halls like a soft melody.

Ludwig van Beethoven, a figure so iconic it felt surreal to share air with him, stood at the heart of it all. With him were small, diligent helpers—assistants and servants of varying backgrounds and talents—each tasked with assisting the grand artist in his creative work. It was a strange, yet exciting time. The market outside was ever-raging, with trade auctions driving the economy into a chaotic dance. The locations of various trades were in constant flux, signs adorned with foreign scripts marking territories and signals of commerce.

Despite all the clamor, there was peace within the house. The noise of the world outside could never truly penetrate the sanctity of the place where music was the priority, the true function of the home. The walls were lined with instruments—string, woodwind, and brass—that waited eagerly for the call to action. The music that poured from them would take on a life of its own, filling the air, curling around the furniture, wrapping itself around the very souls of those who lived there.

Sweden and the West Coast of Europe had long been a source of inspiration for artists, and their beauty had worked its magic on Ludwig. It was a delightful treat to the eyes, and the very landscape seemed to breathe in time with the rhythm of his compositions. Here, on the fringes of civilization, in the quiet corners where the world seemed to slow down, great art would emerge.

The volume in the house often grew loud, stretching beyond the polished professionalism one might expect from a group of esteemed musicians. But that

was the point. To achieve the best sound, one had to push the boundaries—sometimes the notes would clash, the strings would snap, and the woodwinds would screech—but in those moments of dissonance, magic would often appear. It was in the chaos that true art was forged.

Outside the house, the world was in constant motion. The Gutenberg press had revolutionized the way information spread, and with it, the objectives of humanity seemed clearer than ever: to fill the voids, to consume knowledge, to give the people something to hold onto. The press was now a staple of the human experience, its mechanical hum not unlike the rhythms of the house itself.

In this new colony, names were given to its residents with care, reflecting not only their roles but the connection to something greater. They were seen as the servants of the United Kingdom and Europe—creators, workers, thinkers. Many had come from distant lands, their identities rooted in the plants and natural joys of their homelands. It was a place where cultural fusion was not only accepted but encouraged.

Schooling was no longer confined to daylight hours. The pursuit of knowledge had become an all-consuming passion, stretching into the late hours of the night, when the world outside was quiet and the only sound was the rustling of pages and the scratching of quills. The schools, though demanding, had an undeniable energy. They pushed students beyond their limits, expecting them to create with the precision of a finely tuned instrument.

I was one of the many students who fell into this rhythm, though my name—Aloe Vera—was hardly a typical one. I had chosen it for its natural association with healing and resilience. It suited my role in the White administration, where I worked diligently in the next jurisdiction to ensure that progress and organization took precedence. I found solace in the structure of it all, in the meticulous order that society demanded.

But even in the structured world of administration, I could not escape the pull of music. The hum of creativity was inescapable. That’s why, away from the demands of my work, I often took quarters with Ludwig van Beethoven himself. It was a strange arrangement, but one that suited us both. The great composer’s genius demanded an environment that could sustain it, and I—though no musician of note

—provided the assistance he required. I often felt more a servant than an artist, but the music was the reward. The notes, the harmonies, the cadences—all of them filled me in ways I had never imagined possible.

Each day was marked by a ringing, a constant sound that permeated the air. The house was never quiet, even in the late hours. Beethoven, though aging, had a fervor that could not be stilled. His compositions poured forth as if from a never-ending fountain, and the small helpers and I were there to carry out his wishes. We played the instruments he demanded, adjusted the scores, and analyzed every note as if it were a small piece of the grand puzzle. It was exhausting work, but the results were worth every minute of effort.

Neighbors sometimes grew angry with the noise, though. Our loud discussions, debates on technique, and incessant tea drinking grated on their nerves. They could not understand the dedication behind it all—the genius that required hours of constant tinkering, of experimentation. To them, it must have seemed absurd: a White man, a midget, and a colored person making music together. It was a sight to behold, but one that could only be understood by those who had the patience to look beyond the surface.

Tea, however, was a universal constant. The musician himself had little love for coffee, preferring instead the delicate warmth of tea as he contemplated the next great symphony. It was a ritual, one that soothed the mind and prepared it for the battles of composition. Tea drinking was an art in itself, an experience that required the utmost attention to detail. The leaves, the temperature of the water, the steeping time—every factor played a role in achieving the perfect cup.

But all of this—every note, every tea break, every debate on artistic merit—had one singular purpose: to produce the best possible music. It was the lifeblood of our existence. And in this pursuit, money played its part as well. As the world outside spun in its endless cycle of trade and commerce, we too were part of that system. The services we provided were valuable, and there were always financial pressures that hung over us. But it was the music that kept us going, the promise that if we could just perfect that elusive sound, everything else would fall into place.

The social battles we faced, too, were a significant influence on the music we created. The questions of identity, of belonging, of understanding our place in the

world—these were the undertones that shaped the pieces Ludwig wrote. They were subtle, almost imperceptible, but they were there. And as we played the final chords, we understood that the music was not just for the ears. It was a reflection of the world itself, full of conflict, beauty, and the constant striving for something greater.

It was exciting, those days. Some of the best times I'd ever known. And as I sit here now, reflecting on those moments, I can't help but smile. The music was the constant—sometimes discordant, sometimes harmonious—but always alive. And I can't wait for the next challenge, for the next composition that will test our limits, our patience, and our creativity.